

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 MC-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 NEAE-00

SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 /086 W
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P R 241548Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2539

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1132

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS UR LE

SUBJECT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON PRES FRANGIE SPURS

SPECULATION RE SOVIET ARMS OFFER

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR ALEXANDER SOLDATOV CALLED AT 1200 HOURS JAN 23 ON PRES FRANGIE. OFFICAL GOL NEWS AGENCY REPORTS MEETING WAS IN PRESENCE PRIMIN SOLH AND COUNSELLOR OF SOVIET EMBASSY (UNIDENTIFIED) AND QUOTED SOLDATOV AS DESCRIBING THE TALKS AS "IMPORTANT AND USEFUL."

2. AS IS NORMAL, SOLDATOV'S CALL HAS SPURRED PUBLIC SPECULATION THAT USSR HAS OFFERED GOL ARMS AND FINANCING FOR LITANI RIVER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. LEADING FRENCH-LANGUAGE L'ORIENT LE JOUR AND PRO-FEDAYEEN AS SAFIR REPORTED SOVIET OFFER OF MISSILE NETWORKS AND STATED THAT SOLDATOV HAD REQUESTED "URGENT" APPOINTMENT. SAFIR ALONE QUOTED PRIMIN SOLH AS SAYING "SOVIET CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFER IS IMPORTANT AND BENEFICIAL AND IS CHARACTERIZED BY FACILI-

TIES." SAME PAPER CLAIMED USSR HAS OFFERED PROVIDE THREE MISSILE NETWORKS, ONE FOR COAST, SECOND FOR SOUTHERN BORDER, AND THIRD FOR VITAL INSTALLATIONS INSIDE COUNTRY. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR ALSO ALLEGED THAT SOLDATOV INFORMED FRANGIE THAT MOSCOW HAS INFO ISRAELIS PLANNING FURTHER RAIDS A LA KFAR SHUBA INTO LEBANON.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO INFORMATION AT THIS TIME ON SUBJECT MATTER OF SOLDATOV'S MEETING WITH FRANGIE AND SOLH AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY LIGHT EMBASSY MOSCOW CAN SHED. QUESTION OF SOVIET ARMS REMAINS DELICATE SUBJECT FOR GOL AND ONE IT WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO AVOID. PRESS SPECULATION ON THIS SUBJECT, WHICH IS PREDICTABLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, DOES NOT SUGGEST RESPONSE FRANGIE MADE TO ALLEGED OFFER. OUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT IS THAT FRANGIE WOULD RESPOND TO SOVIET OFFER OF MISSILES AT THIS TIME WITH CONVENIENT REFERENCE TO FORTHCOMING MEETING FEB 5 OF ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL IN CAIRO AND THUS FEND OFF SUBJECT FOR THE MOMENT. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER CURRENT PUBLIC SPECULATION HAS BASIS IN FACT AND WILL REPORT RESULTS OF OUR INVESTIGATIONS.

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